PARIS FASHION MILL GRINDS ON IN SPITE OF WAR

Women of France Typified, Says M. Worth, by His Brave Midinettes, Who Are as Chic as Ever

His Establishment Financing 850 Young Women Who Are Dressing Well on 50 Cents a Day

Photos Copyright, 1915, by John Wanamaker.

One piece afternoon gown of oyster white tussor, by Paquin. Blue and white striped linen, by Callot. Old blue linen suit, by Jeanne Lanvin.

Navy taffeta with white beaded yoke, by Jeanne Lanvin. Evening gown of blue Georgette crepe, bouffant skirt corded, by Jeanne Lanvin. Evening gown of creamy tulle, by Doeuillet.

Egyptian gown of sapphire blue charmeuse embroi dered in gold and mother of pearl, by Callot.

Above—Gown of cream net and lace, by Doeuillet. Summer afternoon gown of white organdie and filet lace, by Callot. Three piece gown of navy serge with plaid taffeta, by Callot. Child's dress of white satin, by Jeanne Lanvin. Pink and white tussor gown for afternoon, by Callot. Tussor gown, red coat buttoned on the bias; skirt of pleated blue tussor, by Callot.

MODELS BY PARIS DRESSMAKERS FOR SAN FRANCISCO FAIR, EXHIBITED HERE.

EVERY Saturday morning in Paris the stroller on the Rue de la Paix at a certain hour may see parties of young women of the midinette order converging to a particular point. Their costumes, if not made of the very finest material, at least bear the genuine marks of up to date fashion. One discerns just the right tilt to the hat, line to the jacket, flare to the skirt. It is evident that whatever changes the war has brought it has not altered the chic appearance of the Parisian working woman.

The procession finally disappears behind the portals of No. 7. This place American women distinguished by their taste in gowning do not need to be told is the famous Maison Worth. At the present time the establishment is financing 850 women at the rate of a franc a day. Each of them receives in addition her franc and a quarter from the Government, and on this she lives, a total of about 50 cents. That is not all; in her appearance she is a credit to the house which cannot always furnish her with work but retains her faith and waits with her for happier times.

Naturally at the moment there is not work enough for the big corps of helpers. As you stroll through the gray walled, mirror lined rooms you note a plentiful supply of goods, exquisite costumes, wraps, blouses, everything, in fact, but customers. It is the same story everywhere in Paris among the smart dressmaking establishments. Just as much work as can be given out is distributed among the most deserving. There is no letdown in the display of energy, but one misses the constant going and coming of fashionable women intent on their spring wardrobes.

This procession of midinettes would be a very salutary study to the sort of American woman who complains that she cannot, on $10,000 a year or some such paltry sum, dress herself in the height of fashion. And M. Worth himself pays first of all a tribute to the well gowned woman—not the woman of the $10,000 a year income, but the 50 cents a day working girl.

"Think of it!" he exclaims as he seats himself ready for the interview with a SUN correspondent. "Not only do these women manage to keep alive on that paltry sum but they keep themselves up to the mark. They don't wear old clothes, they don't wear last season's fashions, there is none of the spirit of don't care, not even the very excusable falling off which comes sometimes when one is nervous and harassed, as most of these women are with so many of the men at the front—fathers, brothers and husbands.

"Some one has said that the war has proved a very good test by means of which the people of strong character may be separated from the weak. The strong ones have gone right on with their daily work without showing what is going on in their hearts and souls, while the weak have become completely disorganized.

"I think of this saying when I see the brave little women coming to get their daily allowance in the clothes they have made while their hearts were, perhaps, breaking. Yet they have put into them all the care and thought they would have spent if work were plentiful and wages sure: if they had no dear ones offering their lives for their country; in a word, if things were as they should be.

"For a special example of their extraordinary ability did you notice their skirts?"

The interviewer allows that she did.

"As you know," he continues after your expression of admiration has subsided, "when the war broke out the scant, tight fitting skirt was worn by all except a few. Now the full short skirt is the decree of the smart woman. And all these working women have accomplished this change immediately.

"And the point is they have accomplished it on 50 cents a day! I don't know how they do it. I wish I did."

So we drift easily into the subject of the moment, namely, that of the short skirt which Paris has decided shall be worn.

"And what about that full skirt?" is asked.

"The adoption of the full skirt means, of course, the return of the petticoat and the return of the petticoat means the employment of thousands of women who were absolutely driven out of work when the demand for hand made lingerie and lace practically ceased. There never was a fashion reestablished that has had a better underlying motive.

"The American woman who orders her Paris model of full, short skirt with tight fitting corsage which must be worn with it to keep the harmony complete must naturally order at the same time her petticoats, the most feminine of all garments. In ordering these she is performing the truest of all charities, giving help to those who want to help themselves."

Remembering some of the foot and ankle displays of the boulevards expert opinion is asked on this point. The word "short" in Paris at present really means short when applied to skirts, and in order to get the skirts short enough to suit the taste of some of the fashion mongers the boots are made higher, so that "a skirt which reaches to the top of the boots" has a new meaning.

"The skirts should not be too short," says M. Worth. "Just above the ankles I consider the correct length, and personally, I think a pretty ankle is a very pleasing sight."

Then, fearing perhaps that this anatomical lightness is scarcely consistent with the dignity of the Maison Worth, he reverts to type:

"When the full skirt which measures five yards about was worn by the woman of the Second Empire remember she did not live as do the women of to-day, and so there were no such problems facing the couturiers of her time. The full skirt was not only very full but long as well. She stepped into her carriage and so preserved her dignity and the dignity of her costume.

"To-day we have to modify our modes to suit the conditions of that word sport, as we use the term in France, meaning everything that is embraced in that word athleticism. 'How,' said the designers, 'can women wear these full skirts and yet walk and remain athletic?' The answer was simple. 'Cut them off.' Hence the reason of the short skirt. And who complains? Nobody."

It is not only the hand work and lace making industries that have been affected by the return of the full skirt and the petticoat. At present all commercial Paris seems to have turned into a huge shoe shop.

Every true Parisienne has a pair of shoes with white kid tops, just as she must have a set of ermine, and the white top shoes are just as conspicuous in the window dislays as they are on the boulevards. But beside them are shoes with tan and checked tops, boots with short vamps and boots with long vamps, which seem to suit the French foot; the inevitable Louis Quinze heels higher than ever and the Spanish heel which Americans prefer.

M. Worth is ecstatic over the help that has been given the shoemaking industry by the demand created by the short skirt.

"The woman of to-day certainly while this fashion lasts must take as much pains in selecting her shoes as her hats," he says. "If she can have but one pair she must have a well made, expensive pair; if she can afford several pairs the shoes must be studied for the ensemble just as is the hat. There is no neglecting the foot any more."

"And, in the matter of design, will the war inspire anything new?"

"You mean zouave jackets, military coats, revers, buttons?" M. Worth shakes his head disdainfully. "Caprices. Caprices. We have made a few military models, some of the new blue cloth, the Joffre cloth the soldiers wear, but these are eccentricities, most of them, to tell the truth, inspired by a demand from America.

"Being foolish is not the same as being handsome. It is very foolish for a woman to ape masculine modes or to feel that a great and serious event like war should inspire ideas for her costumes. It belittles its dignity to think of it in such a connection. I predict that the war will be followed by a period of great seriousness, particularly in the fashions."

"And the price of clothes after the war; will that ascend?"

"I do not think so. I see no reason why it should. It is true that the wool goods manufactured in many places, Tournai, Lille, Roubaix, are cut off for the present, but that is only a temporary conditon. The silk industry has scarcely been affected. We manufacture our own silks at Lyons and can easily meet the demand.

"I don't mean, however, to belittle the effect of the war and to say that we have not been hard hit. Of course we have been.

"There is no lack of money in France to-day. France is a rich nation, but her women have too much tact to make any display while such a condition lasts. France is not wining and dining. Her people are living simply, no matter what they possess. Then many of our clientele are in mourning.

"The South American trade has been very slight, for South America has passed through a very grave financial crisis; and on account of the gentle habits of the Germans who threaten neutral ships naturally we do not expect to be overrun with American customers. We are getting ready for the August exposition as usual, but we may have only empty showrooms; who can tell?"

The spirit of the new France is in every one of Worth's gestures and inspires his syllables.

"It has happened frequently in this war that the commander of a detachment has said to his men, 'There is a German trench over there about fifteen yards away. We've got to get beyond that barb wire and take it. I want twelve volunteers, and it is probable that no one will get back.'

"What happens?

"At least a hundred men step forward without a moment's hesitation. They shake hands with their comrades. Perhaps they take a photograph or a letter from the pocket and give it to some one to send to the little woman at home. Then they wave an 'au voir' and go ahead. And they don't come back. They didn't expect to.

"Well, do you think that spirit is going to die? Never.

"After the war France will astonish the world with her powers of recuperation just as she has astonished it by getting ready and facing an enemy who had taken advantage of her belief in that enemy's good faith to make preparations of many years.

"I am most optimistic in regard to the outcome of the war. I am more than optimistic in regard to the future prosperity that will come when peace is declared."

PROF. BRANDER MATTHEWS AS HIS CLASSES SEE HIM

THE public has been made familiar with Prof. Brander Matthews as a novelist, as a short story writer, as an essayist, as a scholar and as a dramatist, but less has been said about him as his students at Columbia see him.

He is very popular with them. One reason is that in the classroom he is like a father talking to a large family. To bridge the gulf existing between teacher and student he uses as his principal vehicle a story—not such a story as will give the class the impression that the person telling it is Prof. Brander Matthews, Ph. D., LL. D., and so forth, but a story so full of life that every listener knows it is Brander Matthews, human being, speaking. After the opening story will come a lecture on the subject that is down for discussion for that day, and then, as if it were part of the curriculum, there will follow another story, and the hour is up, with the class filing out.

It is a familiar sight to see Prof. Matthews crossing the campus smoking a cigarette. It never seems to leave his mouth as it rests half hidden in a maze of stubby beard directly under his nose, the smoke curling up noseward and eyeward until you wonder how he breathes and sees. He smokes a two inch cigarette in the same manner as a German smokes a pipe, at the end of a long stem.

It is his sympathy, his common sense, his helpfulness and his humor which have endeared him to hundreds of Columbia men. When he is asked a question he answers it forthwith. For instance, one young man asked him about the field of journalism.

"Don't stand in the doorway of journalism too long," said he, "for you may catch cold. It's a good door to enter and pass through, but don't linger there too long."

Another student asked him concerning the money returns of writing.

"Authorship," he replied, "is a very poor support. I doubt if there are 450 persons out of 9,000,000 who support themselves from periodical writing. And let me say that in the forty years I have been writing for periodicals I have not met nor do I know of more than two or three good editors."

In his home he has a long shelf of books dedicated to him, and he has autographs from nearly every well known modern author. Mark Twain wrote in one of his books:

"To B. M. from his only friend!"

When a boy it was James Brander Matthews who went to school. But who, as he indignantly asks, wants James as a name? It's not a good author's name, so of what use is it? Consequently he dropped it.

"If you want to write a preface do it this way," said he to a class of admiring students. "Point out that the book is the only one on the market of its kind. That's very essential. Then you want to say that although other books have explained the subject your book handles the other books have failed to explain such and such a thing, which your book dwells upon at great length, of course, thus proving that all former works are incomplete. Do that and your book will sell."

Concerning a meeting with Rudyard Kipling he once said:

"Sixteen years ago I was walking in front of my home in Gramercy Park, when I happened to meet Mr. Rudyard Kipling. We exchanged a few words, and in the course of our short conversation I asked him what he had been doing the last night or so. He replied in his indifferent way that he had written a poem, whereupon I asked him to come in my home and read it to me.

"We seated ourselves before the open fireplace and lit cigarettes. Shortly Mr. Kipling arose from his seat, walked casually up and down the room and recited 'M'Andrews Hymn,' 150 lines of it and more. Mind you, he did not read it; he had it in his head, and had worked it out in two nights. It was as securely fastened upon his memory as upon paper."

Some of his remarks in class, which have been gathered at random, are:

"No one can tell you what books you should read."

"The greatest university in the country is West Point. It trains one for character, and the young man has to have habit and habit means character. There is no second chance at West Point. That is what makes it a great institution, for one of the things that will take the average young man a long time to learn in life is that there is no second chance."

"Col. Roosevelt told me that his courage and successful work were due to his will—a will to be strong in body."

"One of the things a college education ought to give a man is a chance to think for himself. The younger generation has got to find out things for itself."

"A man who is in love with his job has nine-tenths of what life will give him."

"All men have the intelligence of their calling."

Brander Matthews has always been loyal to New York, although he was born in New Orleans in 1852. He was graduated from Columbia in 1871, and entered the law school, where he devoted more time to letters than to Coke and Blackstone. In 1893 he was appointed a professor, and two years ago, when he accepted a class dedication, he wrote:

"I accept your dedication as a birthday gift—so to speak—on my 'coming of age' as a professor."